

# ***Iowa Outdoors***

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**

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## **IOWA LAKES SHOW LITTLE IMPACT FROM LONG WINTER**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' fisheries biologists recently completed fish population surveys of lakes at risk from winter kills and found most had less impact than originally feared.

Meyers Lake, in Black Hawk County, and Silver Lake, in Delaware County, each suffered significant winterkill events following near record snowfalls during 2007-08. The purpose of these netting and electro-fishing surveys was to determine if fishable populations still existed in these lakes or if stocking would be necessary to reestablish fish populations.

Fish populations in Meyers Lake were found to be in good condition with decent numbers of adult bluegill, largemouth bass, black crappie, white crappie and black bullhead. These adult fish will spawn this year and will provide good numbers of fish going into the fall, so restocking will not be necessary at Meyers Lake.

On the other hand, fish populations at Silver Lake in Delaware County were found to be in poor condition with only a few adult bluegills captured in nets. Restocking has already begun when 3,500 fingerling largemouth bass were stocked during the last week of June. Channel catfish will be restocked as fish become available in the fall. A single female adult bluegill is capable of having several thousand offspring in a single year, so restocking of bluegill will not be necessary at Silver Lake. Given good water conditions, we should see fishable populations of bluegill and bass return to Silver Lake within two years.

Silver Lake in Delaware County is currently experiencing higher than average water levels and good water clarity, which means that there is abundant prey available for fish and growth rates should be fast. It takes about two years for bluegill to reach 6.5 inches in Iowa and about three years to reach 7 inches, so expect good fishing in Silver Lake about two years from this fall.

Many other lakes across northern Iowa that were feared impacted to severe winter fish kills were found to have only limited kills. Little Swan Lake, Ingham, Silver Lake at Ayrshire all came through the winter in good shape with fish kill was limited to mostly rough fish.

Mike Hawkins, fisheries biologist at Spirit Lake, said he added extra northern pike to a handful of lakes in his area shortly after ice out in anticipation of a winter kill. After putting the shocking boat in, Hawkins said he found little impacts of a winter kill.

“Those northern pike will still do well in the lakes and will show up in a few years,” he said. He said he will add a few extra walleye fingerlings to Silver Lake in Palo Alto County, but will allow the adult bluegill, bass, crappie, yellow perch and channel catfish to fill the void naturally through spawning.

The story was nearly the same at other north Iowa lakes from the Mississippi to the Big Sioux. Other than a lake here and there, the feared across the board winter fish kills didn’t happen.

**Media Contact: the area fisheries management biologist or Mick Klemesrud, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-281-8653.**

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## **WORK TO IMPROVE MEADOW LAKE BEGINS THIS WEEK**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will begin lowering Meadow Lake 8 feet this week to repair a leaking outlet structure and to improve the in-lake fish habitat. The fish population will not be renovated during this project.

“We have a good bass population in Meadow and a good overall fish population,” said Bryan Hayes, fisheries biologist for the Iowa DNR at Cold Springs. “The drawdown will concentrate the bluegills and crappies and will improve the panfish population in the long run.”

Hayes said a Natural Resources Conservation Service designed silt retention basin will be installed above the lake by next summer. The silt pond will protect the 34-acre lake from any runoff in the watershed.

“The silt retention basin is designed to protect the investment and help to maintain better water quality for years to come,” he said.

Hayes said work on the in-lake habitat includes adding a rock jetty, pea gravel spawning areas, rock fields and rock fish mounds with a pea gravel top. Once the work is done, the lake will be allowed to refill.

“We have the species composition we want in Meadow Lake, and improving the water quality and habitat will be a plus for this lake,” he said.

The lake will be open to fishing during the project, but boating could be difficult as the ramps will not be useable. The DNR has drawn the water level down at Meadow Lake in 1978, 1984, 1989 and 1997 resulting in an improved fish population.

**Media Contact: Bryan Hayes, fisheries biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-769-2587.**

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[Electronic photo available]

## **GREAT EGRETS ARE SPECTACULAR SUMMER RESIDENTS**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The great egret is one of Iowa’s most stunning summer residents. Subsisting on a diet of fish and frogs, the species is most often associated with timbered waterways, quiet river backwaters, or shallow marsh edge. No matter where they occur, these large and showy birds never fail to draw the attention of enthusiastic human onlookers.

During the late 1800s, America nearly lost this magnificent species as plume hunters decimated nesting colonies [called rookeries] in search of feathers. Used to adorn women’s hats, the showy white plumes commanded peak market value and, ounce for ounce, sold for twice the price of gold.

Although the commercial feather trade was outlawed during the early 1900s, remaining egret populations were dealt a second lethal blow as aquatic hunting grounds became contaminated by DDT pesticides. And although the use of DDT has now been outlawed in the U.S., egrets may still consume quantities of DDT contaminated fish while wintering in South America.

In spite of environmental challenges, the great egret continues to make a slow recovery in Iowa. Although migrant or sub adult [non-breeding] birds have become a relatively common sight along the state’s waterways, the species remains a rare nester. Less than a dozen active rookeries are known across the state. Most egret nests are associated with active colonies of great blue herons or cormorants. The future of egrets

and other Iowa wading birds will depend largely on the wise management of river timber, backwaters, and other wetland habitats.

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## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ENHANCE IOWANS' SUMMER RECREATION**

DES MOINES — With summer in full swing, Keepers of the Land, the volunteer program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), offers many statewide volunteer events and opportunities to help Iowans enhance their own and others' summer fun.

- **Outdoor Journey for Girls Events:** Officials with the DNR's hunter safety program are seeking volunteers and participants for three events aimed at teaching outdoor recreation skills to girls, ages 12-15. Volunteers are needed to act as adult chaperones to accompany and be responsible for a small group of young participants throughout the three day camp experiences. All meals and accommodations will be provided for volunteers. Events will be held July 15-17 at Hickory Hills Park in Black Hawk County and August 6-8 at Springbrook State Park in Guthrie County. For more information contact Elizabeth Gull at 515-281-0806, Megan Wisecup at 515-281-7828, or Joli Vollers at 515-281-4075.
- **Campground Host Opportunity:** Officials at state parks throughout the state are seeking volunteers to serve as campground hosts throughout the upcoming camping season. Hosts are offered free on-site camping and assist park staff by greeting campers, answering visitor questions, and completing various maintenance tasks to ensure the camping area is welcoming to the public. State parks currently seeking volunteer hosts include: Lake Ahquabi (Warren Co.), Lake Keomah (Mahaska Co.), Maquoketa Caves (Jackson Co.), Nine Eagles (Davis Co.) and Pleasant Creek (Linn Co.). For more information contact Elizabeth Gull at 515-281-0806.
- **Nursery Enhancement Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR's Forestry Bureau are seeking volunteers to assist with general maintenance activities at the State Forest Nursery in Ames. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing. For more information contact Roger Jacob at 1-800-865-2477.
- **River Cleanup Event:** Officials with the DNR's IOWATER Program are seeking volunteers to take part in the annual Project AWARE river cleanup event that has been rescheduled to August 2-9. This weeklong event involves volunteers not only cleaning up river trash but also having the opportunity to hear renowned speakers and enjoy recreation on Iowa's rivers. For more information contact Brian Soenen at 515-205-8587 or visit [www.iowaprojectaware.com](http://www.iowaprojectaware.com)

A full listing of volunteer opportunities and events is available at [www.keepersoftheland.org](http://www.keepersoftheland.org)

**For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or [Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov)**

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## **NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET IN LEHIGH**

LEHIGH – The Natural Resource Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will meet at 8:30 a.m., July 10, at the Prairie Resource Center in Brushy Creek State Recreation Center, 2820 Brushy Creek Road, near Lehigh.

Commission members and DNR staff will meet at 12 p.m., June 9, at the Country Inn & Suites, 3259 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, in Fort Dodge, for a tour of the area. The tour and the commission meeting are open to the public.

Members of the commission are Kim Francisco, Elizabeth Garst, Carol Kramer, Gregory Drees, Janelle Rettig, William Bird and Tammi Kircher. The Director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

The following is the agenda for the July meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of June 12 Meeting
- Director's Remarks
- Construction Projects
  - Glass Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Sac County – Wetland Restoration
  - Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County – Dike #1 Repairs
  - Lake Keomah State Park, Mahaska County – Office and Service Building
  - Thompson WRP, Fremont County – Wetland Restoration
  - Ferley WRP, Worth County – Wetland Restoration
  - Honey Creek Resort, Appanoose County – 28 Cabins, Driveways and Parking Pads
  - Waubonsie State Park, Fremont County – WaShawtee Cabins Renovation
- Land Acquisition
  - Little Sioux Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Clay County – The Nature Conservancy (TNC) (Burkhart Tract)
  - Eagle Lake WMA, Hancock County – Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (Rasmuson Tract)
  - Lake Edwards/8-mile Pits Wetland Complex, Hancock County – Willard Peck
  - Big Marsh WMA, Butler County – Larry Asche and Betty McCandless
  - Conservation Easement, Jackson County – Timothy and Laura Derga
  - Boone Forks WMA, Hamilton County – Tim and Kathy Finucan

- Boone Forks WMA, Hamilton County – Boone Valley Izaak Walton League
- Easement, Margo Frankel Woods State Park – Polk County
- Management Agreement, Denning Conservation Area, Lee County – Lee County Conservation Board
- Honey Creek Resort State Park Update
- Final Rule – Chapter 40, Boating Speed and Distance Zoning – Catfish Creek
- Notice of Intended Action - Chapter 15, General License Regulations
- Final Rule – Chapter 40, Boating Speed and Distance Zoning – Lake Cornelia
- Final Rule – Chapter 40, Boating Speed and Distance Zoning – Lake Odessa
- Landowner Incentive Program/TNC Gant Funds Agreement
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 85, Trotlines
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 88, Fishing Tournaments
- Black Hawk Lake Diagnostic and Feasibility Study
- Panfish Bag Limits Information
- Publicly Owned Lakes Program – Watershed Selection
- Donations Brief
- Carter Lake Water Supply Agreement
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, Aug. 14, Louisa County

**For more information, contact Kim Rasler at 515-281-7122.**

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